



The Florida House of Representatives

Chris Sprowls
Speaker

NEWS RELEASE

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Florida House Speaker, Members Highlight 5 Bills as 2022 Florida Legislative Session Begins

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (January 11, 2022) — Today Florida House Speaker Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor, highlighted five major pieces of legislation just filed for the 2022 legislative session, among them affordable housing, law enforcement support, individual freedom provisions, abortion and consumer data privacy.

HJR 1: Affordable Housing for Critical Public Employees

To address the key issue of affordable housing, Representative Josie Tomkow, R-Tampa, filed House Joint Resolution 1 and implementing legislation. The bill proposes a constitutional amendment to reduce property taxes through an additional \$50,000 homestead exemption for law enforcement officers, members of the Florida National Guard, K-12 classroom teachers, firefighters, active duty military, correctional officers and child welfare services professionals.

"Floridians understand the sacrifice critical public employees make day in and day out to ensure they are safe, secure, educated and supported. And 'home' is where they go to rest and recharge after a hard day," said Speaker Sprowls. "The Florida House will fight to lessen the financial burden for these key members of the public workforce and their families with a significant and historic tax break."

There are currently two \$25,000 homestead exemptions for Floridians. One applies to all property taxes on the first \$25,000 of assessed value. The second applies to the assessed value between \$50,000 and \$75,000 and only applies to non-school property taxes (does not apply to school board property taxes).

Representative Tomkow added, "Home values and property taxes are on the increase, and Florida's critical public employees deserve a break. They shouldn't worry about whether they have a home to return to while they are out protecting ours."

Ways & Means Committee Chairman Bobby Payne added, "Florida is grateful for the sacrifice of our critical public employees. This legislation builds on the House's commitment to affordable housing for Floridians."

Passage of HJR 1 will place a constitutional amendment on the ballot in 2022 for voter approval of the measure. Passage of the implementing bill (HB1563) will make the necessary changes to Florida statutes to implement the measure upon voter approval of the amendment.

HB 3: Law Enforcement Recruitment and Training

To show the Florida House's continued support and appreciation for Florida's law enforcement community, Representative Tom Leek, R-Ormond Beach, today filed HB 3. Among other measures, the bill designates May 1 of each year as "Law Enforcement Appreciation Day" and includes incentives to recruit talent into the state's law enforcement force. HB 3 also authorizes bonus payments to newly employed officers and offers relocation assistance for out-of-state applicants. It also creates a scholarship to cover tuition and other expenses for basic recruit training programs.

"We owe it to our law enforcement officers to express our appreciation not only in word, but in action," said Speaker Sprowls. "HB 3 is a critical step in establishing a lasting culture of appreciation and retention for Florida's law enforcement community. I commend Representative Leek for leading the way on an issue that means a great deal to so many of our brave law enforcement officers and their families across Florida."

Under HB 3, the State Board of Education Board of Governors must create a process allowing law enforcement or former law enforcement officers to receive postsecondary credit at all Florida public postsecondary educational institutions for training and experience acquired while serving as a law enforcement officer.

To further support current law enforcement officers, the bill also includes:

- New health and wellness training to be added into the law enforcement training curriculum.
- Family Empowerment Scholarships for dependent children of law enforcement officers.
- New public safety training programs within the public school system.

"Today, I join Governor DeSantis and Speaker Sprowls in the effort to make Florida the most law enforcement officer friendly state in the country, and HB 3 is a large step forward," said Representative Leek. "God bless the men and women who put their lives on the line every day so that we can enjoy the blessings of our community."

HB 5: Reducing Fetal and Infant Mortality

House Judiciary Committee Chair Erin Grall, R-Vero Beach, today filed HB 5, which, upon passage, will end the practice of abortions after 15 weeks. The bill also includes pro-life measures for babies after birth by expanding initiatives that are improving infant mortality rates across Florida.

"The Florida House remains steadfast in our commitment to Florida's children, both born and unborn," said Speaker Sprowls. "HB 5 significantly narrows the available window for elective abortions while providing new resources and programs to reduce infant mortality in Florida. This bill was the result of the hard work of many Members, and I'd like to particularly thank Chairs Grall and Burton for their leadership on this important issue."

HB 5 is consistent with Mississippi's 2018 Gestational Age Act and the related pending U.S. Supreme Court case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, for which oral arguments were heard in December and a decision is anticipated next summer.

"As a dedicated champion for the unborn, I am proud to support this legislation as a capstone to my fight for life in the Florida House," said Representative Grall, "and I am grateful for Speaker Sprowls' leadership on this worthy cause. We owe it to future generations of Floridians to address these issues now."

The legislation reflects the Speaker's deep-rooted commitment to Florida's children – before and after birth – and their mothers. As such, HB 5 builds on last session's legislation to improve maternal mortality rates by extending

Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one year. HB 5 expands several initiatives working to reduce infant mortality rates, for which Florida ranks 31st in the nation, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“When you look at the data, you understand that saving the lives of babies both before and after birth must be a priority,” said Representative Colleen Burton, R-Lakeland, Chair of the House Health & Human Services Committee. “Living out our commitment to children, born and unborn, is how we begin to build a healthier Florida.”

HB 5 also:

- **Expands Fetal Infant Mortality Review Committees (FIMRs) across the state.** Nearly half of Florida’s counties are currently not represented in a FIMR, and data shows that mortality rates are higher in these areas. These committees engage medical professionals and communities to review infant mortality cases and recommend reduction efforts tailored to their specific communities. This bill appropriates funds for up to 11 more FIMRs to cover the entire state.
- **Requires hospitals with labor and delivery services to participate in Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative Initiatives.** Dozens of hospitals currently participate in initiatives of this type, which range from opioid recovery programs to reducing cesarean overuse in deliveries. The goal of this requirement would be to create a statewide standard for quality birthing services and evidence-based interventions around issues like opioid abuse that cause higher rates of infant mortality.
- **Creates a counter-tobacco marketing initiative to target pregnant women.** With tobacco and substance use being a leading cause of infant mortality, HB 5 directs the Department of Health to create counter-marketing campaigns through the Comprehensive Statewide Tobacco Education And Prevention Program to target pregnant women and women who may become pregnant about the risks of tobacco use.

HB 7: Principles of Individual Freedom

Filed today by Speaker pro tempore Bryan Avila, R-Miami Springs, HB 7 upholds the American belief that all people are created equal with provisions to ensure that education materials in Florida’s schools are consistent with this shared value.

“In filing HB 7, the Florida House reaffirms our commitment to the belief that every Floridian, regardless of their race, gender, religion or any other quality is entitled to their dignity as an individual. Our bill makes it clear that Florida is a place where people will be judged by their words, their character and their actions,” said Speaker Sprowls. “Unfortunately, there are some activists that have tried to hijack the important conversation about race and use it as a pretext to attack institutions ranging from capitalism to the very idea of objective truth in the hard sciences. They want to use the sins of the past to shut down dissent in the present. HB 7 ensures Florida’s workplaces and schools are places where we can have healthy dialogues about race or diversity without losing sight that we are all, first and foremost, unique individuals.”

The legislation is a response to concerns that students and workers are being pushed to adopt the personal or political viewpoints of employers, teachers or textbook authors. The bill addresses these concerns in a number of ways, among them, by identifying several principles of individual freedom to guide instruction and curriculum, such as:

- No individual is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex.
- No race is inherently superior to another race.
- No individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability or sex.

“Florida’s students and workers deserve to learn and earn in positive environments that value each individual,” said Representative Avila. “I am proud to support this important and timely legislation.”

Added Representative Chris Latvala, R-Clearwater, Chair of the House Education & Employment Committee, “Every child deserves the opportunity to learn in an environment that recognizes their value as an individual – equal to all other individuals. This legislation affirms this basic common value held by most Floridians today.”

Currently, the Florida Civil Rights Act prohibits unlawful discrimination by employers. HB 7 also clarifies that required workplace trainings that compel workers to believe concepts contradictory to the principles of individual freedom is unlawful discrimination.

HB 9: Consumer Data Privacy

Representative Fiona McFarland, R-Sarasota, today filed HB 9 in a renewed effort to protect the private data of consumers.

“Throughout my career in the Florida House, I have prioritized the need to protect Floridians’ private information in this digital age. Floridians shouldn’t have to sacrifice their privacy simply because they engage in commerce. No business has the right to steal and sell any Floridian’s private information, and HB 9 would end this unconscionable practice.”

Passage of HB 9 would lead to the expansion of Florida’s Information Protection Act (FIPA) to include protections for biometric data, which includes fingerprints, voice recordings and retina scans. Because biometric data is sensitive, greater protections are needed. The bill adds FIPA data breach protections for breaches of biometric data combined with a person’s name.

“When we interact with websites, apps, and services online, we leave behind troves of personal information about ourselves,” said Representative McFarland. “While we celebrate the spirit of American ingenuity and innovation, we must balance this with protections for our private information. I look forward to continuing this worthy fight to protect Floridians’ data privacy.”

Additionally, HB 9 outlines several new consumer data privacy protections:

- **Creates Right to Know** – Gives consumers the right to know what information a business has collected about them.
- **Creates Right to Delete** – Allows consumers to request to delete or correct certain personal information, unless the information is crucial to maintaining the person’s account.
- **Creates Right to Opt-Out of Sale** – Requires businesses to allow consumers to “opt-out” of the sale or sharing of personal information to third parties, giving consumers more control over their personal information.
- **Requires Certain Privacy Procedures to be Followed** – Requires businesses to let consumers know how their personal information will be collected, stored and disseminated. It will allow consumers to make an informed decision before interacting with such business.
- **Limits Retention of Personal Information** – Limits a business’ internal use and how long it keeps personal information.

Added Representative Blaise Ingoglia, R-Spring Hill, Chair of the House Commerce Committee, “The time has come for powerful technology companies to take responsibility as stewards of our sensitive consumer and personal information. We must start holding them accountable.”

For more information on these bills, visit myfloridahouse.gov.

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